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Ball Four (Paperback)  
by Jim Bouton  
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In the middle of August I went to see Marvin Milkes, the general manager of the Seattle Angels. I told him that I wanted some kind of guarantee from him about next year. There were some businesses with long-range potential I could go into over the winter and I would if I was certain I wasn't going to be playing ball.

"What I would like," I told him, "is an understanding that no matter what kind of contract you give me, major league or minor league, that it will be for a certain minimum amount. Now, I realize you don't know how much value I will be for you since you haven't gone through the expansion draft and don't know the kind of players you'll have. So I'm not asking for a major-league contract, but just a certain minimum amount of money."

"How much money are you talking about?" Milkes said shrewdly. "I talked it over with my wife and we arrived at a figure of \$15 or \$16,000. That's the minimum I could afford to play for, majors or minors. Otherwise I got to go to work."

To this Milkes said simply, "No."

I couldn't say I blamed him.

It was right about then, though, that the knuckleball I'd been experimenting with for a couple of months began to do things. I won two games in five days, going all the way, giving up only two or three hits. I was really doing a good job and everyone was kind of shocked. As the season drew to a close I did better and better. The last five days of the season I finished with a flurry, and my earned-run average throwing the knuckleball was 1.90, which is very good.

The last day of the season I was in the clubhouse and Milkes said he wanted to see me for a minute. I went up to his office and he said, "We're going to give you the same contract for next year. We'll guarantee you \$22,000." This means if I didn't get released I'd be getting it even if I was sent down to the minors. I felt like kissing him on both cheeks. I also felt like I had a new lease on life. A knuckleball had to be pretty impressive to impress a general manager \$7,000 worth. Don't ever think \$7,000 isn't a lot of money in baseball. I've had huge arguments over a lot less.

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